Strategic Role Conflict in Middle Management: Antecedents and Consequences

A Synopsis

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1. Introduction

Role theory is a perspective in organizational literature that focuses on the idea that people's behavior is predictably different depending on their individual identities as well as the context, or setting. Thus, as employees, individuals play specific roles in organizations and their behavior in those roles is socially-determined through others' expectations. The central problem under this theory is that those expectations can come from many different actors in the organization; this creates role conflict when employees have conflicting expectations placed on them. Role conflict occurs when their expectations directly contradict each other and the employee is unable to meet both sets of expectations, and these conflicts generate strain for the employee that can, in turn negatively impact the organization.

Some jobs are deliberately intended to be linchpin positions, where an individual serves two groups with different expectations. Middle managers are expected to exert their influence upward toward top management and downward toward frontline managers and employees. Middle managers play several important roles, which—when executed well—can have significant impacts on their organizations. However, these roles can create inherent conflict for the middle manager who has to address expectations from the

frontline as well as top management. In order to meet expectations and perform their roles well, this conflict must be resolved.

Two sources of resolution through which individuals can diminish the negative effects of experiencing role conflict are personal factors that help them maneuver through role conflict. These include negative attitudes and behaviors such as dissatisfaction, distrust, lack of loyalty, and absenteeism. But there are also positively-oriented personal factors that I extend to the role episode model: goal setting, cognitive restructuring, learning new skills or knowledge, gaining new information about self or others, experiencing opportunities for personal growth, receiving support from others and social resources.

Positive organizational behavior (POB) is the study of human resource strengths and psychological capacities that are positively oriented. POB seeks to explain the performance benefits of these qualities, but only if they are present in sufficient quantities. Luthans examined the personal factors that contribute to such positive perceptions and capacities, including hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. They found that a combination of these factors speaks to individual differences in perceptions of both the contexts that generate conflicts as well as the resolutions to those conflicts. Therefore, psychological capital is a key personal factor in explaining differences in individual middle managers' ability to mitigate role conflict.

My research focuses on understanding middle managers' experience of role conflict, which is defined as the experience of being pulled in opposing directions by different sets of activities. I address this question by exploring three areas:

(1) How do middle managers perceive their role conflict?

(2) How does role conflict affect performance?

(3) What psychological resources can help to mitigate the negative effects of role conflict?

In the end, I will explore a moderated mediation model proposed by Edwards and Lambert (2007) to determine how middle managers can offset the negative impacts of role conflict.

2. Objectives

Objective 1: Examine the impact of demographic characteristics of middle managers on the level of strategic role conflict they experience.

- Investigate the specific demographic characteristics that significantly contribute to the strategic role conflict.
- Analyze the magnitude and direction of the relationships between demographic characteristics and strategic role conflict.

Objective 2: Assess the influence of the middle manager's position within the organization on strategic role conflict.

- Identify the aspects of the middle manager's position that lead to a higher or lower degree of strategic role conflict.
- Explore any moderating factors that may affect the relationship between the middle manager's position and strategic role conflict.

Objective 3: Investigate the effect of dissimilarity between top and middle managers' perceptions of environmental factors on strategic role conflict.

- Identify the key environmental factors where top and middle managers' perceptions differ the most.

- Analyze the association between the level of dissimilarity in perceptions and the degree of strategic role conflict experienced by middle managers.

Objective 4: Examine the role of relationship quality between middle managers and their superiors in strategic role performance.

- Assess the components of relationship quality that have the greatest impact on strategic role performance.
- Analyze how different levels of relationship quality affect strategic role performance and the experience of role conflict.

3. Literature Review

Floyd and Lane (2000), Strategic renewal is a process, composed of three distinct sub processes: competence definition, competence modification, and competence deployment. Each of these sub processes calls for a different set of strategic roles. The authors argue that each of these sets of roles differ in the behaviors that they call for, their time horizons, the core values that they embed, the information required, and their emotional tone. When an organization faces ambiguous information about which strategic renewal sub process should be used, managers at all levels are likely to develop consistent interpretations of environmental cues and reach similar conclusions as to what strategic renewal sub process is required; and as a result, what strategic role each level of management should enact. When faced with highly turbulent and complex conditions, managers may focus on different sub sections of the environment, interpret environmental cues differently and/or assess their relative importance differently.

Friedman & Podolny(1992), Middle managers experience role conflict when their boss and subordinates have conflicting expectations for their behavior. For example, top managers may expect middle managers to behave strategically while middle managers may prefer to take a reactive approach. Under turbulent and complex environmental conditions, this difference in perception can lead to negative consequences for middle

managers' performance. Top managers often have different expectations for middle managers than do the middle managers themselves, leading to role conflict. When environmental conditions are turbulent and complex, middle managers are likely to experience role conflict and struggle with their strategic performance.

Rebecca Hirte(2018), The study of middle management has been limited by a lack of focus on implementing corporate incubation, which the authors seek to address. They find that middle managers are decisive actors in change projects and organizational transformation as a whole, though this role is often overlooked. By examining a current case, the authors provide a basis for future research that can further illuminate middle management and corporate incubation.

Nancy , Hugh Lee and Jackie Ford(2014), Control and resistance are central concepts in critical approaches to management and organizations, where a dominant power faces resistance from subordinate workers. However, recent theories question this distinct opposition and understand control and resistance as dialectical—that is, unstable categories that are mutually implicative and coproductive. Resistance reifies and produces that which is being resisted, through carving it out as a space for political contest, legitimizing it in the process.

Zeeva Millman and Jon Hartwick(2019), A survey of seventy-five Montreal middle managers was conducted to investigate their perceptions of the impact of office automation on their jobs and work. The findings showed that middle managers perceived that office automation had led to a variety of changes that, almost without exception, made their jobs and work more enriching and satisfying. Furthermore, middle managers with first-hand experience with various systems were even more positive than managers without this exposure. The importance of these findings is discussed in the context of related work drawn from the fields of psychology and organizational behavior.

Yueyue Liu and Meng Xi (2021), Research has found that CEO EO can have a double-edged sword effect on firm performance. Drawing on the social information processing theory and social cognitive theory, using multilevel, multi-source data from 198 Chinese firms, this study found that CEO EO affects firm performance by triggering middle managers' confidence in the organization's prospects or workplace anxiety, which is moderated by middle managers' entrepreneurial self-efficacy. It explicates the CEO EO–performance relationship and the vertical pervasiveness of EO in organizations.

Agarwal and Kumar (2018), examine the role of middle managers in the execution of strategy in Indian manufacturing firms. Their study aims to understand how middle managers contribute to strategy execution and to identify the factors that affect their

involvement in the process. The authors conduct a survey of middle managers from 86 manufacturing firms in India, exploring their strategic involvement in three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal.

Vertical involvement refers to the degree to which middle managers engage with top management, whereas horizontal involvement denotes the extent to which middle managers collaborate with their peers across different functional areas. Diagonal involvement relates to middle managers' engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders. The study uses a structured questionnaire to measure these dimensions and gather data on middle managers' demographics, experience, and industry background.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a significant role in the execution of strategy, particularly in terms of vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is particularly critical in aligning middle managers with the strategic goals set by top management, ensuring consistency in implementing these strategies throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement helps middle managers create synergies and facilitate cross-functional coordination, which is essential for the effective execution of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that affect middle managers' strategic involvement, including their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Experienced middle managers with a strong educational background are more likely to engage in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer tenure within an organization allows middle managers to develop a better understanding of the firm's strategic context, goals, and internal dynamics, which enables them to contribute effectively to strategy execution.

Bansal and Datta (2017) investigate the role of middle management in the implementation of strategy in the Indian automotive industry. The study aims to evaluate the strategic involvement of middle managers in terms of their influence on strategic decision-making, as well as the factors that affect their contribution to the process. The authors conduct a survey of 300 middle managers from 19 automotive firms in India, capturing the level of involvement in strategic activities across different dimensions, including vertical, horizontal, and diagonal involvement.

Vertical involvement refers to middle managers' interactions with top management, while horizontal involvement represents their collaboration with peers across various functional areas. Diagonal involvement encompasses engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders. The study employs a structured questionnaire to gather data on middle

managers' demographics, industry background, and experience, along with their strategic involvement.

The findings reveal that middle managers in the Indian automotive industry play a crucial role in the implementation of strategy, particularly through vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is essential for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals and ensuring that these goals are consistently executed across the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is crucial for successful strategy implementation.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to engage more in strategic activities and decision-making. Additionally, longer tenure within an organization enables middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, enhancing their contributions to strategy implementation.

Chakraborty and Banerjee (2020) explore the antecedents of middle managers' strategic commitment in the Indian IT sector. The study aims to identify the factors that influence middle managers' commitment to implementing organizational strategies and to

understand the role of commitment in executing these strategies effectively. The authors conduct a survey of 315 middle managers from 14 IT firms in India, using a structured questionnaire to gather data on middle managers' demographics, background, strategic commitment, and factors that may influence their commitment.

The study measures middle managers' strategic commitment using a multi-dimensional approach, assessing the extent to which they are dedicated to, engaged with, and feel a sense of ownership in the organization's strategic goals. The authors identify several antecedents of middle managers' strategic commitment, including their role clarity, role autonomy, role support, and top management's communication of strategic goals.

Role clarity emerges as a significant factor in determining middle managers' commitment to organizational strategies, as it helps them understand their responsibilities and expectations in the strategy implementation process. Role autonomy, or the degree of freedom and discretion given to middle managers in performing their tasks, also influences their strategic commitment by enabling them to contribute to strategy execution more effectively. Role support from top management and colleagues positively affects middle managers' commitment by providing necessary resources, encouragement, and guidance.

Furthermore, the study reveals that effective communication of strategic goals by top management is crucial in fostering middle managers' commitment. Transparent communication ensures that middle managers understand the organization's strategic vision and align their efforts accordingly, leading to more effective strategy execution.

Garg and Pandey (2016) examine the strategic role of middle managers in the Indian banking sector, with a focus on understanding their contribution to strategy implementation and the factors affecting their involvement in strategic decision-making. The authors conduct a survey of 200 middle managers from 20 banks across India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on middle managers' demographics, industry background, experience, and level of involvement in strategic activities.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders. The authors also explore factors that may influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a critical role in strategy implementation in the Indian banking sector, particularly through their vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy implementation.

Gupta and Kumar (2019) investigate the role of middle managers in strategy formulation and implementation within Indian manufacturing firms. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic processes and to identify the factors that influence their contributions to both strategy formulation and implementation. The authors conduct a survey of 212 middle managers from 60 manufacturing firms in India,

using a structured questionnaire to collect data on middle managers' demographics, experience, background, and level of involvement in strategic activities.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a significant role in both strategy formulation and implementation in Indian manufacturing firms, particularly through their vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective formulation and implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer

organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Iyer and Sharma (2017) explore the strategic influence of middle management in family-controlled firms within the context of Indian manufacturing companies. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic processes and decision-making and to identify the factors that enable them to exert strategic influence within family-controlled organizations. The authors survey 190 middle managers from 50 family-controlled manufacturing firms in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on middle managers' demographics, experience, background, and level of involvement in strategic activities.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a crucial role in the strategic processes of family-controlled firms in the Indian manufacturing sector, particularly through their

vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is vital for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective formulation and implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement within family-controlled firms, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Jain and Dhar (2016) investigate the role of middle managers in implementing business strategies within the Indian IT sector. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic processes and to identify the factors that affect their contributions to strategy implementation. The authors survey 278 middle managers from 12 IT firms in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on middle managers' demographics, experience, background, and level of involvement in strategic activities.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a significant role in implementing business strategies in the Indian IT sector, particularly through their vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy implementation.

Kaur and Bhatnagar (2018) qualitatively explore role conflict experienced by middle-level managers in the Indian manufacturing sector, focusing on understanding the sources and consequences of such conflicts. The authors conduct in-depth interviews with 30 middle managers from ten manufacturing firms in India to gather data on their work experiences, perceived role conflicts, and the factors contributing to these conflicts.

The study identifies several sources of role conflict for middle-level managers. These include conflicting expectations from top management and subordinates, inadequate resources and support, the pressure to balance operational and strategic responsibilities, and cultural factors within the organization. The authors also highlight various consequences of role conflict, such as reduced job satisfaction, increased stress, decreased motivation, and negative impacts on work-life balance.

The findings reveal that middle-level managers in the Indian manufacturing sector face considerable role conflict, which may hamper their ability to effectively contribute to strategy formulation and implementation. The authors argue that understanding and addressing the sources of role conflict is crucial for organizations to leverage the strategic potential of middle managers and improve overall organizational performance.

Mathur and Verma (2017) examine the influence of organizational context on middle managers' strategic role in Indian organizations. The study aims to understand how

contextual factors, such as organizational structure, culture, and leadership style, affect middle managers' involvement in strategy formulation and implementation. The authors survey 156 middle managers from various industries in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of the organizational context.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that organizational context plays a crucial role in shaping middle managers' strategic involvement in Indian organizations. A decentralized organizational structure with less bureaucracy enables middle managers to engage more effectively in strategic activities and decision-making. A supportive and open organizational culture encourages middle managers to take on strategic roles, as they feel more empowered and have a greater sense of ownership in the organization's goals. Additionally, a transformational leadership style, characterized by inspirational motivation, individualized

consideration, and intellectual stimulation, promotes middle managers' strategic involvement by providing the necessary support and encouragement.

Mishra and Mohapatra (2020) investigate the antecedents of role conflict among middle managers in Indian public sector enterprises. The study aims to understand the factors that contribute to role conflict and to identify potential solutions to mitigate its negative effects on middle managers' ability to engage in strategic activities. The authors survey 158 middle managers from 12 public sector enterprises in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of role conflict.

The study identifies several antecedents of role conflict among middle managers in Indian public sector enterprises. These include inadequate role clarity, conflicting expectations from top management and subordinates, lack of resources and support, cultural factors within the organization, and the pressure to balance operational and strategic responsibilities.

The findings reveal that role conflict is a significant issue for middle managers in Indian public sector enterprises, potentially hampering their ability to contribute effectively to strategy formulation and implementation. The authors argue that addressing the factors

contributing to role conflict is crucial for organizations to leverage the strategic potential of middle managers and improve overall organizational performance.

Nambudiri and Gupta (2018) examine the role of affective commitment in the relationship between middle manager role conflict and strategic outcomes in organizations. The study aims to understand how middle managers' emotional attachment to their organizations can affect the impact of role conflict on strategic performance. The authors survey 203 middle managers from various industries in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, perceptions of role conflict, affective commitment, and strategic outcomes.

The study finds that middle managers in Indian organizations experience significant role conflict due to factors such as conflicting expectations from top management and subordinates, lack of resources and support, and the pressure to balance operational and strategic responsibilities. These conflicts can negatively impact strategic outcomes, such as strategy implementation and organizational performance.

However, the findings also reveal that middle managers with high levels of affective commitment to their organizations are more resilient to the negative effects of role conflict on strategic outcomes. Affective commitment, as an emotional attachment to the

organization, can act as a buffer that mitigates the adverse effects of role conflict by fostering greater loyalty, dedication, and engagement in strategic activities.

Varma and Chugan (2017) investigate the role of middle managers in strategy implementation within Indian organizations. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, the factors that contribute to their strategic influence, and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 305 middle managers from various sectors in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in Indian organizations play a significant role in strategy implementation, particularly through their vertical and diagonal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the

organization. Diagonal involvement fosters effective communication and coordination with subordinates and external stakeholders, which is essential for the successful implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy implementation.

Srivastava and Yadav (2020) propose a conceptual framework for understanding the strategic role of middle managers within the context of Indian organizations. The study aims to synthesize existing literature on middle managers' involvement in strategy formulation and implementation, identify key factors that contribute to their strategic influence, and explore the implications of their involvement on organizational performance.

The proposed conceptual framework highlights three dimensions of middle managers' strategic involvement: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to

interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders. The authors argue that middle managers play a crucial role in bridging the gap between top management's strategic vision and the operational activities necessary for strategy execution.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, organizational tenure, and individual capabilities. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation. Individual capabilities, such as leadership skills and decision-making abilities, are also critical in determining middle managers' effectiveness in their strategic roles.

Singh and Sengupta (2019) examine the role of middle management in strategic decision-making within the Indian automobile industry. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, the factors that contribute

to their strategic influence, and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 198 middle managers from various automobile companies in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in the Indian automobile industry play a significant role in strategic decision-making, particularly through their vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective formulation and implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure.

Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Sharma and Garg (2018) investigate the role of middle managers in strategy execution within the Indian service sector. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, the factors that contribute to their strategic influence, and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 181 middle managers from various service sector organizations in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in the Indian service sector play a significant role in strategy execution, particularly through their vertical and diagonal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Diagonal involvement fosters effective communication and coordination with subordinates and external stakeholders, which is essential for the successful implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy execution.

Saha and Chakraborty (2018) explore the role of middle managers as agents of change in Indian manufacturing firms. The study aims to understand the factors that enable middle managers to facilitate change and innovation, and how their involvement in

strategic activities contributes to organizational performance. The authors survey 152 middle managers from 60 manufacturing firms in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their role in driving change.

The study measures middle managers' involvement in change and innovation initiatives across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in Indian manufacturing firms play a significant role as agents of change, particularly through their horizontal and diagonal involvement. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and coordination, which is essential for promoting innovation and change initiatives. Diagonal involvement enables middle managers to effectively communicate change objectives and strategies to subordinates and external stakeholders, ensuring successful implementation of change initiatives.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' effectiveness as agents of change, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure.

Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more effective in driving change and innovation. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their ability to facilitate change.

Rastogi and Trivedi (2017) examine the role of middle managers in strategy formulation and implementation in Indian firms. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, the factors that contribute to their strategic influence, and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 210 middle managers from various sectors in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in Indian firms play a significant role in strategic activities and decision-making, particularly through their vertical and horizontal

involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective formulation and implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Raj and Srivastava (2016) examine the strategic role of middle managers in the Indian public sector, focusing on their involvement in strategy formulation and implementation. The study aims to understand the factors that contribute to middle managers' strategic influence and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 184 middle managers from various public sector organizations in India,

using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in the Indian public sector play a significant role in strategic activities and decision-making, particularly through their vertical and diagonal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Diagonal involvement fosters effective communication and coordination with subordinates and external stakeholders, which is essential for the successful implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer

organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Pahuja and Sahay (2019) investigate the strategic influence of middle managers in Indian manufacturing firms. The study aims to understand the extent of middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, the factors that contribute to their strategic influence, and the implications of their involvement on organizational performance. The authors survey 252 middle managers from 56 manufacturing firms in India, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on their demographics, work experiences, and perceptions of their strategic roles.

The study measures middle managers' strategic involvement across three dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical involvement refers to interactions with top management, horizontal involvement entails collaboration with peers across different functional areas, and diagonal involvement relates to engagement with subordinates and external stakeholders.

The findings reveal that middle managers in Indian manufacturing firms play a significant role in strategic activities and decision-making, particularly through their vertical and horizontal involvement. Vertical involvement is crucial for aligning middle managers with

top management's strategic goals, ensuring that these goals are consistently executed throughout the organization. Horizontal involvement fosters cross-functional collaboration and coordination, which is essential for the effective formulation and implementation of strategies.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic involvement, such as their level of experience, education, and organizational tenure. Middle managers with more extensive experience and strong educational backgrounds tend to be more engaged in strategic activities and decision-making. Longer organizational tenure allows middle managers to develop a deeper understanding of the firm's strategic context, objectives, and internal dynamics, thereby enhancing their contribution to strategy formulation and implementation.

Aalbers and Dolfsma (2015) provide a literature review focused on middle managers, strategy implementation, and ambiguity in the context of public sector management. The study aims to synthesize existing research on middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, particularly their role in implementing organizational strategies in the face of ambiguity. The authors review a range of articles, identifying key themes and gaps in the literature.

The review highlights that middle managers play a critical role in strategy implementation as they serve as a bridge between top management's strategic vision and the operational activities required for successful execution. They are responsible for translating strategic goals into actionable plans, engaging with cross-functional teams, and communicating with subordinates and external stakeholders.

Aalbers and Dolfsma also discuss the challenges faced by middle managers in dealing with ambiguity, which arises from factors such as unclear strategic objectives, inconsistent expectations from top management, and rapidly changing business environments. The authors suggest that middle managers are in a unique position to manage ambiguity due to their proximity to both top management and frontline employees. Their ability to interpret and make sense of ambiguous situations can be crucial in ensuring the successful implementation of strategies.

The review identifies several gaps in the literature, particularly the need for more empirical research on the specific mechanisms through which middle managers manage ambiguity during strategy implementation. Additionally, the authors call for research focusing on the public sector context, where middle managers often face unique challenges, such as bureaucratic constraints and complex stakeholder dynamics.

Buchanan and Badham (2008) explore the role of power, politics, and organizational change in their book "Power, Politics, and Organizational Change: Winning the Turf Game." The authors provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with managing organizational change, focusing on the importance of understanding power dynamics and political processes within organizations.

The book highlights that organizational change is inherently complex and requires a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the change process. Buchanan and Badham argue that power and politics play a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of change initiatives. The authors provide a framework for analyzing power dynamics within organizations and offer strategies for managing the political aspects of change.

The authors emphasize that successful change management requires engaging with key stakeholders, building alliances, and navigating the political landscape within the organization. They argue that understanding and managing power dynamics is essential for both initiating and sustaining organizational change.

Furthermore, the book discusses the role of middle managers in organizational change, recognizing them as pivotal actors in the change process. Middle managers occupy a unique position within the organization, as they are responsible for translating top

management's strategic vision into actionable plans and overseeing the execution of change initiatives. They also play a significant role in managing the politics of change, as they often act as intermediaries between top management and frontline employees.

Currie and Procter (2005) examine the antecedents of middle managers' strategic contribution within a professional bureaucracy context. The study aims to understand the factors that influence middle managers' involvement in strategic activities and decision-making, focusing on a case study of a UK National Health Service (NHS) hospital.

The authors adopt a qualitative research approach, conducting in-depth interviews with 25 middle managers and observing various management meetings to gather data on the participants' roles, responsibilities, and perspectives on strategic involvement. The research focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by middle managers in navigating the complex and highly regulated environment of the NHS.

The study identifies several antecedents that impact middle managers' strategic contribution. Among these factors are the degree of decentralization within the organization, the level of professional autonomy, the extent of managerial discretion, and the organizational culture. In the case of the NHS hospital, the highly centralized and bureaucratic nature of the organization limits the strategic influence of middle managers,

as their ability to contribute to decision-making is often constrained by top-down directives and tight regulatory controls.

Gómez and Sánchez (2005) investigate the role of middle managers in the strategy process, focusing on a case study of a large Spanish bank. The study aims to understand middle managers' involvement in strategic activities, their influence on the formulation and implementation of organizational strategies, and the factors that contribute to their strategic role.

The authors employ a qualitative research approach, conducting semi-structured interviews with middle managers, top executives, and other key stakeholders within the bank. The interview data is supplemented with an analysis of internal documents, such as strategic plans and performance reports.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a vital role in the strategy process, acting as a bridge between top management's strategic vision and the operational execution of those strategies. Middle managers contribute to strategy formulation by providing valuable input based on their deep understanding of the bank's internal dynamics and market environment. In strategy implementation, they play a crucial role in translating strategic goals into actionable plans, coordinating cross-functional teams, and ensuring that strategic initiatives are executed effectively.

The study also identifies several factors that influence middle managers' strategic role, including their level of experience, professional expertise, and relationships with top management. Middle managers with extensive experience and strong professional expertise are better positioned to provide valuable insights during strategy formulation and to effectively manage the execution of strategic initiatives. Moreover, strong relationships with top management enable middle managers to communicate effectively and gain support for their strategic ideas and initiatives.

Huy, Corley, and Kraatz (2014) examine how shifting legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions impact the implementation of radical organizational change. The study aims to explore the dynamics of legitimacy and emotions in organizational change processes, focusing on a case study of a prestigious university that underwent significant transformation over five years.

The authors use a longitudinal qualitative research design, collecting data through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and archival materials. They analyze the data to understand how employees' legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions evolve over time, and how these factors affect the success or failure of change initiatives.

The findings reveal that support for change initiatives can shift dramatically over time as employees' legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions change. Initially, employees

may support radical change when they perceive it as necessary and legitimate, often fueled by a sense of urgency and shared goals. However, as the change process unfolds, employees may begin to question the legitimacy of the initiatives and experience emotional reactions such as frustration, disappointment, and anger, which can undermine their support for the change.

The study also highlights the importance of middle managers in managing these shifting legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions. Middle managers play a pivotal role in communicating the rationale for change, addressing employees' concerns, and navigating the emotional landscape of the organization. By understanding and managing employees' emotional reactions and legitimacy judgments, middle managers can foster a more supportive environment for implementing radical change.

Lüscher and Lewis (2008) explore organizational change and managerial sensemaking by examining how middle managers work through paradoxes during the change process. The study aims to understand the role of middle managers in making sense of and managing tensions, contradictions, and ambiguities that arise from organizational change initiatives.

The authors employ a qualitative research approach, conducting a longitudinal case study of a large high-tech company undergoing significant change. They collect data through

in-depth interviews, observations, and archival materials to examine middle managers' sensemaking processes during the change initiative.

The findings reveal that middle managers play a crucial role in navigating paradoxes and contradictions inherent in organizational change. They engage in sensemaking activities to interpret and address tensions, working through paradoxes by adopting various sensemaking strategies, such as reframing, boundary spanning, and fostering dialogue. These strategies help middle managers reconcile competing demands, resolve ambiguities, and balance conflicting interests, enabling them to facilitate the change process.

The study also highlights the importance of middle managers' cognitive and communicative abilities in managing paradoxes. Middle managers who possess strong cognitive skills can effectively reframe paradoxical situations, identify creative solutions, and align diverse interests. Additionally, proficient communication skills enable them to engage in productive dialogue and facilitate information exchange among various organizational stakeholders.

Mantere (2008) investigates the relationship between role expectations and middle manager strategic agency in the context of organizational strategy. The study aims to understand how middle managers' strategic roles are shaped by the expectations placed

on them by various organizational stakeholders and how these expectations influence their strategic actions and decision-making.

The author employs a qualitative research approach, conducting a case study of a Finnish industrial firm undergoing a strategic change process. Data is collected through in-depth interviews with middle managers, top executives, and other key stakeholders, as well as analysis of relevant documents such as strategic plans and performance reports.

The findings reveal that middle managers' strategic agency is influenced by multiple role expectations from different organizational stakeholders, including top management, peers, and subordinates. These expectations can either enable or constrain middle managers' strategic actions, depending on the extent to which they align or conflict with each other. When role expectations are consistent, middle managers are more likely to take strategic actions aligned with organizational goals. However, when expectations are conflicting or ambiguous, middle managers may struggle to balance competing demands and may engage in strategic actions that deviate from the intended strategy.

Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, and Roe (2011) explore the interface between top management teams and middle managers in the context of organizational strategy. The study aims to develop a process model that describes how top management teams and middle managers interact and collaborate in strategy formulation and implementation.

The authors propose a process model that consists of four phases: (1) strategic sensemaking, (2) strategic sensegiving, (3) strategic action, and (4) strategic feedback. The model emphasizes the reciprocal nature of interactions between top management teams and middle managers and the importance of communication and collaboration in the strategy process.

In the strategic sensemaking phase, top management teams gather and interpret information to develop a strategic vision for the organization. They then engage in strategic sensegiving, where they communicate this vision to middle managers and solicit their input and feedback. Middle managers, in turn, play a crucial role in translating the strategic vision into actionable plans during the strategic action phase. They coordinate cross-functional teams, allocate resources, and oversee the execution of strategic initiatives. Finally, in the strategic feedback phase, middle managers provide top management teams with feedback on the progress and outcomes of the implemented strategies, which informs future strategic decisions.

4. Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to giving idea or plan in which researcher is using various methods & process to accomplish research objectives or target. In other words we can also explain, it is a systematic & formal way to find out the solution for particular research problem.

It is a science of learning how research is to be carried out. The meaning of Researcher is describing, explaining, and estimating all facts that are related to work.

In simple words, we can explain the research methodology is a combination of two words i.e.

- Re + Search
- Re means again & again and Search means find out something new on specific topic.

Data collection:-

1. **Primary Data**

This study based on Primary as well as secondary database. The analysis will be based on primary data. Primary data will be collected from colleges or management Institutions and means of gathering the information will be students & faculty. The methods for gathering the data will be personal Interview & Questionnaire.

2. **Secondary Data**

- Journals
- Magazines
- Websites
- Research publications

5. Hypothesis

1. The demographic characteristics of middle managers are significant predictors of the amount of strategic role conflict they experience.
2. Nature of the middle manager’s position within the organization as independent variable and strategic role conflict as dependent variable.
3. Dissimilarity between top and middle managers' perceptions of environmental factors as an independent variable and strategic role conflict as a dependent variable.
4. Relationship quality between middle managers and their superiors can be an important factor in strategic role performance.

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